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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 000396

SIPDIS

IO/PSC HEATHER VON BEHREN, AF/C CHRISTOPHER LAMORA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/03/2019

TAGS: CG IN PGOV PHUM PREL

SUBJECT: GOI OPEN TO RECONSIDERING MONUC DECISION IF DRC MAKES RIGHT MOVES

REF: STATE 18863

Classified By: Acting DCM Peter G. Kaestner for Reasons 1.4 (B and D).

We will not stay where we are not wanted but ...

¶1. (C) Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Peter Kaestner met MEA United Nations-Political Division Joint Secretary Asit Bhattacharjee on March 3, 2009 regarding India's plans to withdraw its troops from the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). Kaestner expressed the USG's gratitude for Indian peacekeeping efforts and asked Bhattacharjee how the US can help resolve this matter so that India can continue its participation in MONUC. Bhattacharjee responded that the GOI has given the DRC many opportunities to make amends for its negative public statements about India's participation in MONUC. However, the DRC has instead refused to express confidence in Indian troops to counter negative press articles about them. Bhattacharjee emphasized it is GOI policy not to be present where it is not wanted and will work with the UN on an orderly withdrawal process of the Indian contingent and equipment. He admitted the UN is extremely worried about the withdrawal's impact on peace and security in the area.

...We can reconsider if DRC makes right moves

¶2. (C) Bhattacharjee said the GOI would welcome a delegation from the DRC to consult on MONUC participation but questioned whether that could resolve the matter. The DRC made both private and public comments against India's MONUC involvement; the DRC's efforts to make amends would have to go beyond mere private assurances and be at least as public as the DRC's negative public statements. He added that though the GOI's decision was political, India does not hold a "doctrinaire" position on the matter. India has contributed to UN peacekeeping missions a long time including to the Congo from 1960-1965 in which India suffered many casualties. The GOI is not used to taking drastic measures, but there have to be consequences to the DRC's actions and words, Bhattacharjee added.

Comment

¶3. (C) The GOI seems open to reviewing its decision provided the DRC makes private, and more importantly, public moves to make amends. The GOI feels it has been insulted and for it

not to lose face, the DRC will need to make dramatic moves to persuade India to stay in MONUC.

WHITE